

SAFETY TIPS: HELP PREVENT MEDICATION ERRORS



As people age, most will develop multiple health problems that require prescription medication and sometimes multiple medications. These simple precautions and modifications can help prevent medications errors.



Fill prescriptions at the same pharmacy whenever possible. Pharmacies have a computer system that alerts pharmacists to potential drug conflicts or overfilling of prescriptions that may indicate misuse. The pharmacist can answer questions and alert patients to possible side effects.



Make a medication list and include all prescriptions including over-the-counter medicine and vitamins. Keep the list with you, especially when traveling. It is also important for caregivers to have a current list of medications.



Be aware of the potential side effects of each drug, including possible interactions with other medications. Older adults process drugs differently so don't be afraid to call your physician or pharmacist with questions about side effects.



Create a medication chart, include the name, color and shape of each pill and if possible, attach a picture for easy identification. Be sure the chart includes the start date of the prescription, dosage and frequency. Also, note the reason the prescription was ordered. Finally, include any special instructions or side effects provided by the pharmacy.



Store all medications properly. Throw out old or expired medications.



Never put more than one type of medication in the same pill bottle. In addition, never put medication in a bottle that is labeled for a different prescription.

For more information, visit nihseniorhealth.gov.

